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## Maine Farmer.

BECKEL HOLMES, Editor.  
S. L. BOARDMAN, Editor.  
Our Home, Our Country, and Our Brother Man.

### Corn Philosophy.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—It is a very common precept among good farmers, that we cannot hoe too much, especially at this season; yet, there are those among successful farmers who profess a different faith, and act accordingly, so their corn gets one hoeing in the course of the season, and but one, and they claim that a second hoeing done at the time and in the manner it is usually done, with cultivator and hoe, is a positive injury, which they attribute to the work of disturbing and cutting the numerous little roots lying nearest the surface, causing the corn, as they say, to "stand still" several days after it is hoed the second time. Others think a second hoeing is injurious only when it is followed by a spell of very hot and dry weather, which is frequently the case. Now as it is commonly understood that there are certain conditions of the soil and growth of plants which should be taken advantage of to insure the greatest benefit from hoeing, may there not be opposite conditions, and know better how to avoid, that farm labor, scarce as it is, may be the better economized.

At any rate, if farmers shall be favored through the columns of your excellent paper with something of the philosophy of the subject, as well as more of clear and practical information they may gain something as a standard for future practice, and be benefited in their crops, and the greater confidence in which they shall labor.

D. W. B.

Sidney, June 29, 1864.

We can philosophize and theorize, and even moralize on the subject of hoeing Indian corn, and other branches of its cultivation, but, after all, the actual truth, which should guide us in the business, can only be elicited by a series of test experiments, instituted and carried on with a view and purpose of ascertaining the best modes of raising the greatest crops of corn at the least cost. Such experiments have never, to our knowledge, been fully and systematically tried. Hence we are all working in accordance with partial knowledge of facts. Some of us manage as our individual experience and observation dictate. Some of us as somebody else dictates, and some of us have no particular mode of management or system at all.

We were taught, when a boy, to raise corn the old-fashioned way of the Old Colony used to do, viz., choose warm, sandy loam for the field—manure it well with green manure thrown, during the previous winter, from the barn windows, spread and plowed under. Plant four kernels in a hill, having the hills just four feet apart each way. It was then, as soon as fairly up, "weed out," next "hilled," then, in August, the process was to cut the stalks, and most generally "hoe in eye," which was sown broad cast among the corn, and scuffed in with the hand hoe. At the different times of hoeing a small plow was run up and down the rows—a small boy riding the horse to plow, and a "bigger boy" holding it. It was a sort of routine business, and yet we raised good crops. How much better corn we should have raised on the same land had we pursued the more modern mode of level surface hoeing, and using the modern cultivator, we cannot tell. It was probably not the best nor the worst mode. Let us now give, as our correspondent says, "something of the philosophy of the subject," as far as the light of nature (we have no revelation on the subject) will guide us.

That all plowing, cultivating and hoeing among corn cuts and mangles the surface of the soil, and therefore some injury to it, is very evidently demonstrated. The first hoeing, or "weeding," if done soon after the corn is up, does not do this to any extent, because the roots have not then stretched very far from the stalk, but every later operation of the kind does, and the more so in proportion to the size of the corn operated upon. Step into your corn field at this time of the year and make a careful examination of the roots there. You will find, perhaps, the parent kernel still adhering to the roots. You will see that it first put out two sprouts from its points or "chit." One of them, the tap root, extended downwards, putting out a great number of fibrous roots from its sides, as it plunged deeper and deeper. The other sprout stretches upward and resembles a short white cord, until it comes near the surface of the ground, when it abruptly bulges out larger, and from its circumference pushes out a number of horizontal roots like radii, or spokes to a wheel, or, perhaps, more like the stay ropes to a canvas tent. These last named roots not only convey nourishment into the basis of the stalk, but also support it in an upright position, bracing and upholding it on every side. You will also find that when the main stalk is only about eight or ten inches high, a foot long, you cannot, therefore, run a plow or cultivator, or hoe very near the sides of this corn, without cutting, breaking or mangling them, and it has never yet been thought to be compatible with the laws of vegetable physiology, or conducive to the health of plants to do such mischief to their roots.

That corn will live and give a pretty good crop under such treatment is not in consequence of doing it, but in spite of it. Indian corn is what botanists call an "endogenous" plant—that is, it grows from within outward, and not the reverse of this, as a tree does. The fountain of life within, is constantly repairing any damage done to the frame work without, and will push out more roots to make good the loss of those you destroy. It must, and will have roots near the surface of the ground. Hence, if you should follow the old fashioned mode of hilling up corn, and make a pretty high mound around it, you would find it, soon after, putting out an uprooter. Now does it not look reasonable that if no damage be done to the roots, this expenditure of vital energy would be spared, and the whole activity be employed in increasing and maturing the plant, and therefore a greater crop produced? If yes—then cultivating, hoeing, &c., is so far an injury, and this brings us to this conclusion, viz., that if there were no weeds to trouble us, and we could keep the soil from baking or becoming too compact, the very best mode of raising Indian corn would be, after plowing and putting the land in good till, to plant the corn a suitable distance apart, over the land all

over with a thin mulching of good, old, well rotted manure, and let it alone until harvest. We were led to this belief several years ago, by watching the growth and development of some corn that came up from seed dropped accidentally on the bed of an old compost heap. The heap had been all carried away except an inch or two over the surface of the ground. Very few weeds sprang up, and the corn had all its own way unmolested. No hoeing or any disturbance of the surface was done. In the fall it was gathered. All the ears were large and well filled out over the end of the cob. The stalks were then carefully dug up and the roots examined. The number and extent of the roots surprised us. We have now forgotten to what length the horizontal roots extended, but we have a clear recollection of digging over four feet (it was a deep, free, easy sandy loam) before we came to the end of the tap root. A boy who helped, after looking at all with evident curiosity, relieved his surprise by exclaiming "By George, I didn't think corn was so rooty."

As we before said, there is no doubt that our mode of cultivation among the rows of corn cuts and mangles many of the superficial roots, and by so much injures it for the time. But if this were not done, the weeds in most of our land would do a worse injury. Some of us have in time past, raised better corn on burnt land without any hoeing, than on plowed land. We think the excellence of such crops, though attributable mostly to the virgin fertility of the soil and to the ashes, &c., is also, in part, owing to its surface roots being undisturbed by the hoe.

Our corn philosophy, therefore, in the abstract, leads us to discard hoeing and cultivating among the rows. Why not carry it out in the concrete, in practice? Because the weeds won't let us. We make, therefore, cultivating and hoeing, a choice of two evils. Hoeing corn to destroy the weeds injures the crop some—allowing the weeds to grow and the soil to crust over, would injure it more.

Moral:—Hoe as little as will do to keep the weeds down and the soil mellow.

### Notes from our Copy Drawer.

The Trustees of the Pennsylvania Agricultural College have elected Prof. Wm. H. Allen, (formerly President of Girard College) to the Presidency of that institution, filling the vacancy occasioned by the lamented death of Dr. Evan Pugh. Prof. A. is a fine scholar, and a man of high character, but his qualifications are far from new position remains to be seen.

MAINE DEVON IN NEW BRUNSWICK. The *Colonist* (St. John's) Farmer, of a recent date, notes the fine herd of stock belonging to John T. Smith, Esq., of Bellevue Farm, near St. John, took occasion to pay a compliment, just and well merited, to one of our enterprising and intelligent stock breeders, John F. Anderson, Esq., of South Windham. We are pleased to learn that the excellent qualities of this gentleman's Devons are known and esteemed among the leading farmers of our neighboring province, who are exhibiting commendable energy in improving their breeds of stock.

THE HORTICULTURIST. Peter B. Mead, Esq., has retired from the editorial management of the *Horticulturist*, and the work will hereafter be published and conducted by Geo. E. & F. W. Woodward, 37 Park Row, N. Y. Mr. Mead is a graceful and entertaining writer, and has edited the work with great ability. The July number gives evidence that it will be conducted with spirit and energy, and made useful and interesting.

### Awarding Premiums at Fairs.

A judicious and careful manner of awarding premiums at our agricultural exhibitions, is a thing of considerable importance, and something that if well considered, will have a decided influence in properly directing the resources of a county, but if not judiciously regulated, will be a means of consuming the funds of a society and return no permanent good. We care not what the managers of certain societies may say, but we affirm it to be an injudicious plan, although it may be a crowd, and therefore add to the financial department of the society—to award a very large premium for the fastest trotting horse, or the best example of horseback riding for ladies, (although in their proper places they are both legitimate and deserve encouragement) and a very small one for the best managed farm, the best example in thorough drainage, or the permanent improvement of pasture and mowing lands. It is also very often the case that insufficient premiums are awarded for certain crops or improvements—that is, premiums which are no inducement for a farmer to raise the specified crop, or undertake the improvement for which the premium is offered. Premiums of this kind, if decided upon by the trustees of a society should be liberal, and such as will offer an inducement to competitors. Again, it may be well to award premiums for the best crops grown at least expense, or special improvements carried out at least cost.

There is another matter which cannot be too highly commended or recommended to all societies, viz., the awarding premiums to young lads for the discipline of oxen, steers and colts, or for growing certain crops—say one-fourth of an acre of corn, grain or roots—performing the entire labor themselves. This plan would at least stimulate them to be careful, self-dependant and to hope.

We hope these things will receive the attention of the trustees of our various societies, in considering their premium lists.

### Report of the Depart of Agriculture.

The bi-monthly report of the Commissioner of Agriculture for May and June, has been received, and is an improvement upon the two preceding ones, inasmuch as it discards theories and opinions, and deals with facts, thus returning to the original plan of the Department in publishing these reports. The Commissioner should receive the thanks of the agricultural community for the good sense exhibited in the preparation of this number, and also carry out in future issues, as nearly as possible, the same general plan. By so doing we shall have facts and data that will be timely and reliable, and at the same time be delivered from such stuff as has been forced upon us in recent numbers of this bi-monthly. But why not have these reports once a month? To not see a report upon the crop prospects and weather in May, until the middle of July, seems too much of the tap root. They were published once a month last year, why not this? We see no good reason to the contrary.

### "Pro Bono Publico."

We call attention to the following extract from the law relating to the franking privilege, recently passed by Congress. By this it will be seen that no pre-payment of postage is required in addressing letters, small parcels, seeds, outfits, &c., to the Commissioner of Agriculture or his chief clerk. This will greatly facilitate the usefulness of the Department, and we hope farmers will improve the opportunity offered them to communicate with the Department for the mutual improvement and elevation of the agricultural community.

"Be it enacted, &c. That all communications relating to the official business of the Department to which they are addressed, of whatever origin, addressed to the Chief of the several Executive Departments of the Government, or to any principal officers of each Executive Department, of being sent by mail, shall be deemed to be authorized by the Postmaster General to frank official matter, shall be received and conveyed by mail free of postage without being inclosed in a letter, or with the name of the writer."

Approved June 1, 1864.

### Communications.

For the Maine Farmer.

#### Rambles in the Pacific States—No. 5.

IN-HOSPITABLE HOSPITALITY.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—We often hear loud praises bestowed on the hospitality of the people of the Southern and Western States, and doubtless very justly. The virtue of hospitality is probably exercised by them in as great a degree as by the Eastern people in similar circumstances. In my travels I have been made to feel that I was in the arms of a friendly giant, and I have also met with some exceedingly cheerful treatment from persons originally from the Southern States. Here is an instance.

On returning from the Columbia river across the State of Oregon, in February, 1861, I arrived one evening, after a very fatiguing day's walk through deep mud, at the little village of Walker, where I intended to pass the night. But, unfortunately, nearly all the houses and stores that composed the village were untenanted, and there was no one to take me in. The town of Roseburg was six miles distant, and to wallow so far through the mud in my exhausted condition seemed impossible; but I had no alternative. The ferryman, who had just met me over the North Umpqua river, directed me across some hills in order to reach a point where the mud was less, and I went on. Darkness soon came on and I became bewildered and lost my way. As I wandered about, not knowing whither I saw a light glimmering from a distance. I approached it, and found it was the house of a man who had just returned from the hills, and who had just met me over the North Umpqua river. He was a man of high character, but his qualifications are far from new position remains to be seen.

"Mix thoroughly together equal parts of the white of eggs and lard or sweet oil. Apply to the parts affected linen cloths saturated with this mixture, and change them as often as they become hot and uncomfortable. This application is only to be used in scalds and burns where the skin is off. In all cases where the skin is not removed, cloths wet every five minutes in a mixture made of two parts cold water, with one part common spirits and applied will be of more service. Continue these applications till the burning and inflammation is removed. Then apply an ointment made of equal parts, beeswax, fresh butter and resin, melted together. This will seal the sores and remove the scabs. Burns and scalds must always be kept excluded from the light and air as much as possible, as this increases the irritation and prevents their rapid healing."

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### Agriculture of the Ancients.

The Rev. George Wilkins recently delivered a lecture to the students of the Royal Agricultural College, England, from which the following is an extract:—"Egypt, China and Japan, both in ancient and modern times, had population in proportion to the extent of these countries greater than the more modern countries of Europe. Greece, at present time, and yet all were supported by the produce of these countries alone, without importations from foreign lands; and the same, I believe, may be said of Palestine, Greece, and nearly so of Rome; and the accounts we have lately received of the modern husbandry of China and Japan show clearly that with all our superior chemical and mechanical science, those countries are much before us in the art of tillage, seedling, and in the knowledge of what are the real rubia of plants."

Further, the extracting the volatile alkali, the food of plants, from the urine of cattle, was known to the priests of the Temple of Jupiter Ammon, according to Pliny, 3000 years back, and the alkali obtained the name of ammonia from the domestic affairs of all kinds have been to us the most instructive on those arts of any I have ever read.

The Baucis of Virgil, also, which are familiar to most people, and the writings of Theophrastus and Columella, all show that their countrymen were far before us in the knowledge and practice of agriculture as others of their countrymen were in other arts.

All the really useful knowledge on agriculture we have has been obtained from the books of the ancients, though not directly, but through the writings of Tuller and Tull, and a few others, who were fine classical scholars, likewise have left indelible evidence that they may have been surpassed by the best farmers this country has possessed; that they knew more about the qualities of soil, and how to cultivate them, than the most skillful of our modern farmers do."

While there may be, and doubtless is, a considerable basis of truth in such statements as the foregoing, we are inclined to think them often very greatly overdrawn—especially in the writings of gentlemen who are far better qualified to criticize and interpret the classics, than they are to judge of, or perhaps to appreciate, the real condition of modern husbandry.

### Agricultural Miscellany.

#### Agricultural Education.

When the well-to-do and well-meaning farmer looks around upon his healthy and happy family with a view of settling the prospects and advising the future of his children, he is not likely to soon become active participants in the battle of life, it is not unfrequently the case that he reasons something after this manner: Joseph, the elder, has a pleasant and useful education, and a successful merchant; for him I will secure a place in some prominent mercantile establishment, where an opportunity will be afforded for acquiring a liberal education, and a good business. I will send him to a college, and he will be a gentleman, and a successful merchant; for him I will secure a place in some prominent mercantile establishment, where an opportunity will be afforded for acquiring a liberal education, and a good business. 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